
UNIT-5: DICTIONARIES

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5.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to introduce you to all major aspects of Dictionaries and Encyclopedias.

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- classify dictionaries into various categories;
- explain the specific type of dictionaries that help answer a particular query;
- assess the value of a dictionary before acquiring;
- give examples of different types of dictionaries;
- describe various types of dictionaries;

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Dictionary is the most widely known and used reference source. It has become an important segment of reference collection in all types of libraries. There are various types of dictionaries known by different names. The general, subject and special dictionaries and how are they put to different uses by reference staff is discussed in this unit. The guidelines for evaluation of dictionaries have been defined so that only standard dictionaries could be acquired for a library.

Dictionaries are the most commonly used reference sources. Among all reference books, they are the oldest and have been in use since along time. They are widely used for getting meaning of the words. The children are taught at school level itself to use a dictionary to find meanings and spellings of difficult words. In addition to this dictionaries provide synonyms, antonyms, derivation and history, pronunciation, usage etc. Some dictionaries include illustrations also they are used by all irrespective of their age and education.

5.2 DICTIONARIES

It is reference book consisting of a collection of words of a language or subject arranged in some definite order, usually alphabetical.

5.2.1 Definition and Meaning

The word ‘Dictionary’ is derived from the medieval Latin word ‘**Dictionarium**’. It originated from the term ‘dictio’ meaning ‘a word’ or a ‘phrase’. Thus, a dictionary deals with the words.

There are some dictionaries having both lexicographical and encyclopedic features. They are called encyclopedic dictionaries. Eg:

Encyclopedic Dictionaries of Art, Literature and Science / ed by W.T. Brande. New Delhi : Deep & Deep Publications, 1989. 2 vols.

There are also some concise encyclopedias, which are nothing but mere dictionaries.

Encyclopedia Dictionary of Mathematics/ ed by Kiyosi Ito. 2nd ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987.

Therefore it is rather difficult to draw a dividing line between dictionaries and encyclopedias. In short, the basic difference between the two is that a dictionary deals with the words where as an encyclopedias gives information about words, topics or subjects.

Eric Pattridge defines a dictionary as ”a word book”.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines dictionary as “a book containing a collection of the words of a language, arranged in alphabetical order; it usually gives the orthography, pronunciation and meaning of each word”.

Self-Check Exercise-1

(a) What is a basic difference between dictionary and an encyclopedia.

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

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5.2.2 Alternative Names for Dictionary

Dictionaries, which deal with words, are known by alternate names. They have similar purpose with a slight different in scope. They are known as Word book, Lexicon, Thesaurus, Vocabulary, Glossary and Gradus.

Word Book

The term 'Word book' itself is self-explanatory. It means a collection of words in a book eg. *Harapp's Picture Wordbook*.

Lexicon

The word 'Lexicon' is derived from Greek word 'Lexikon', denoting the totality of words which means 'dictionary'. Lexicology and Lexicography are two branches of Linguistics. Lexicology deals with study of the origin and meaning of words. Lexicography is the art of compiling a dictionary. Hence, Lexicon means 'a dictionary of the words of a language'. It is generally used for dictionaries of ancient languages viz., Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic or Hebrew etc. Eg:

Greek-English Lexicon by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott 9th edition, Revised by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English / ed by M.C.Arthur, Reprint ed. Addition – Wesley, 1992.

Thesaurus

The word 'Thesaurus' also has its origin in Greek. It means a 'store house' or 'treasury' of words. Peter Mark Roget was the first person to use 'thesaurus' for English dictionary in 1852. Eg:

Roget's International Thesaurus. 6th ed. Harpercollins, 2001.

Longman Pocket Roget's Thesaurus/ ed by Susan M. Lloyd, Penguin UK, 1999.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary means a list of words. It is derived from a Medieval Latin word 'Vocabularium'. It is often used for a stock of words and phrases with brief explanations and meanings restricted to a single work.

An International Vocabulary of Technical Theatre Terms in eight languages (American, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish). New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1959.

Glossary

The word Glossary is taken from the Latin word 'Glassarium' which means a 'collection of words peculiar to a field of knowledge'. It explains the technical terms of specific dialect or a subject along with explanations.

The A.L.A. Glossary of Library and Information Science / ed by H.Young. Chicago: American Library Association, 1983.

The Librarian's Glossary of Terms used in Librarianship and the Book Crafts and Reference book. 4th ed. Deutsch, 1977. Reprinted in Lexington Books in 1982.

Gradus

It is a dictionary designed to aid in writing poetry.

Self-Check Exercise-2

What are the various alternative names used for a dictionary ?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

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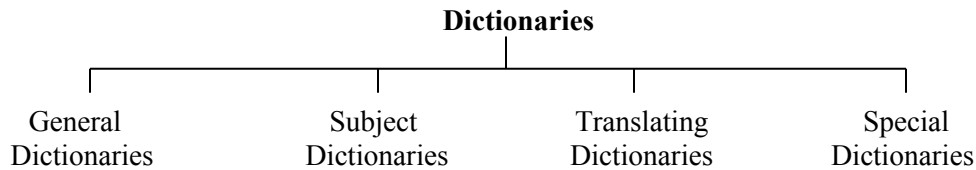
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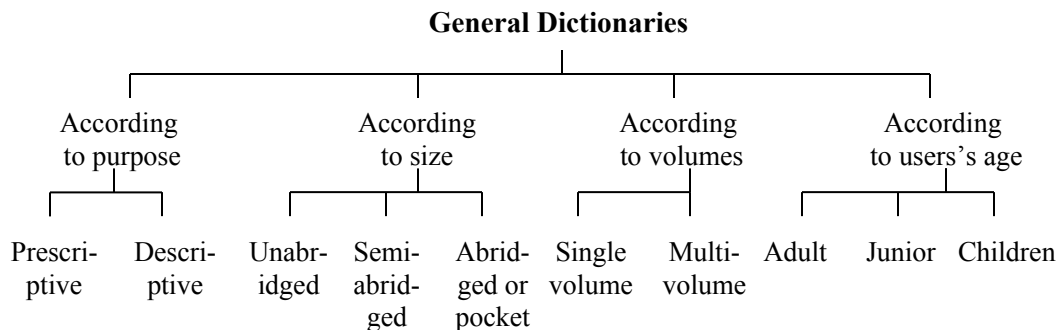
5.2.3 Types of Dictionaries

The dictionaries cover almost all fields of knowledge. We have a wide range and variety of dictionaries. They are divided into different categories depending upon their nature, scope and language. Usually, librarians categorise them into the following groups, as it facilitates them in administration and organisation of the reference department:



GENERAL DICTIONARIES

The General dictionaries deal with common words of a language. These are the most popular and readily used dictionaries. They are again classified into four groups according to the purpose, size, volume and users's age.



Generally, the dictionaries are compiled with two basic purposes. They are:

- i) to set authoritative standards for spelling, pronunciation, meaning and usage; and
- ii) to record the words of a language with their spellings, meanings and uses

The dictionaries compiled with the first purpose are called '*Prescriptive*'. These dictionaries usually include only the standard and approved words worthy of use. They avoid

slang, coined or borrowed expressions. eg. *Dr. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of English Language*.

The dictionaries compiled with the second purpose are known as '**Descriptive**'. They include all the words that are collected and recorded from contemporary sources of literature, popular, literary and technical journals and magazines and newspapers. eg. *Oxford English Dictionary*; *Webster's Third new International Dictionary*.

U.K. and U.S. are the main countries of the world for publishing all types of dictionaries. The four big dictionary houses in U.K. are Oxford, Collins, Longman and Chambers. Now, Cassell is also emerging as one of the big dictionary houses. On the other hand in U.S.A., we find Webster and Funk & Wagnals as leading publishing of dictionaries. More and more publishing houses joining this enterprise. The standards of the new comers are high. The established dictionaries meet new challenges with improved editions. It is a good trend. The future user will have wider choice and higher quality dictionaries.

The arrangement dictionaries according to the different categories can be illustrated by examining the two famous families of dictionaries which have members of various sizes, volumes and user's age.

- i) **Oxford family** of dictionaries published from England by Clarendon press at Oxford.
- ii) **Webster's family** of dictionaries published from American by G. & C Merriam at Springfield Massachussts.

Category	Members of the Oxford family	Members of the Webster family
Unabridged, Multi-volume dictionary for adults	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 3rd ed. 2000. From 2nd ed. onwards OED is available on online. It is also available on CD-ROM (OED-1 and OED-2)	<i>Webster's third New International Dictionary of the English Language</i> . 3rd ed. 2002 This is available both in book & CD-ROM format. CD-ROM edition came out in oct.2002.
Semi-adridged or desk dictionaries for adults	<i>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English</i> , 10th rev. ed. 1999 <i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i> , 6th ed.	<i>Webster's Concise Family Dictionary</i> , (1975)
Abridged or Pocket dictionaries for juniors	<i>The Pocket Oxford Dictionary</i> . (Reprint 1999) <i>The Little Oxford Dictionary</i> (Rev. 7th ed.) <i>The Oxford Mini-Dictionary</i> 1999	<i>Websetr's Elementary Dictionary</i> 1999. <i>Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary</i> (10th ed. 1998) <i>Merriam Webster's Intermediate Dictionary</i> , 1994

School dictionaries
for children

*The Oxford illustrated Jr.
Dictionary*, (Rev. ed. 1996)

*Merriam Webster's Elementary
Dictionary*, 1999

Oxford Children's Dictionary

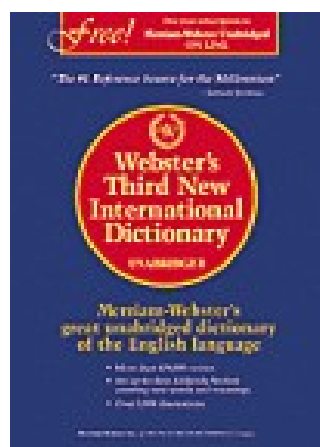
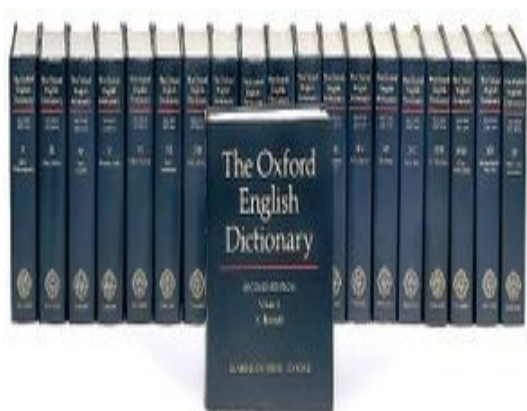
*Webster's New Secondary
(updated ed. 2003) School*

Dictionary, 1961.

Oxford School Dictionary
2002 s

*Merriam Webster's School
Dictionary*, 1994.

Several other publishing houses are also making efforts to bring out the dictionaries in simple, informative and easy to use forms.



Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary. London: Collins, 2nd ed, 1989.

Collins Cobuild Concise Dictionary. Rev ed. London: Collins. 2003.

Collins Cobuild English Dictionary. London: Collins. 3rd ed.

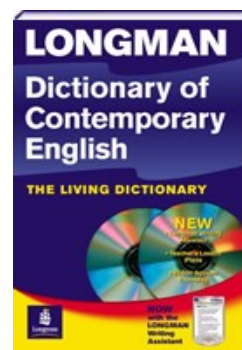
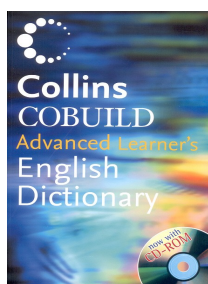
Collins Cobuild Pocket dictionary. London: Collins. 1996.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. 3rd ed. Longman, 1996.

Longman Handy Learner's Dictionary. London: Longman. New ed. 2000

Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary. Funk and Wagnalls co; 1977.

Random House Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Random House, 2nd ed. Unabridged. 1987.



Now, let us take some examples of Indian dictionaries.

Category	Hindi	Telugu
Unabridged Multivolumed dictionary for adults.	<i>Hindi Shabdasaagar</i> / by Shyam Sunder Das and others. New & enl. ed. Varanasi: Nagri Pracharini Shabha, 1965-75. 11 volumes	<i>Sri Surya Rayandhra Nighantuvu.</i> Hyderabad: Andhra Saraswatha Parishad, 1979. (8 vols)
Unabridged single <i>language</i> , Comp. by Sitaramacharyulu. New Delhi:	<i>Bhargava Adarsha Hindi</i> Volume dictionary 16th, ed Varanasi:Bha Bhargava Book Depot., 1984.	<i>Sri Shabdaratnakaramut : a dictio- Shabdakosh./</i> ed. by <i>nary of Telugu</i> Ramachandra Pathak. B. Asian Educational Services. 1988.

Self-Check Exercise-3

a) Differentiate between Prescriptive and Descriptive dictionaries.

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

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b) Write two examples of unabridged multi-volume dictionaries.

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SUBJECT DICTIONARIES

The dictionaries which deal with terms of a particular subject field are known as subject dictionaries. The rapid growth and development, and specifications in all the fields of knowledge has resulted in growth and use of the new words or specialized terms for which the general dictionaries do not provide adequate information. Therefore, it necessitated to compile subject dictionaries which are devoted completely to specific subject fields. As a result many subject dictionaries and glossaries in Humanities, Social Sciences and Science & Technology are coming out day-by-day.

The subject dictionaries differ from a general dictionaries in the following ways:

Subject dictionaries	General dictionaries
They contain highly specialized technical terms of a particular subject.	They contain general terms pertaining to all fields. The highly specialized terms are not found in general dictionaries.
The terms are coined, borrowed, adopted, and invented by the specialists of a particular subject.	The terms are developed by language experts and generalists.
They provide descriptive information and accurate definitions of technical terms.	This information is not covered in the general dictionaries.
They include brief biographies of eminent subject specialists agencies and institutions belonging to the subject field.	The general dictionary do not provide this information.
They are compiled by the experts in the subject field.	They are compiled by the language experts.

The subject dictionaries form an important part of a reference library. They are revised frequently because the terms coined or borrowed are to be added regularly due to fast advancement in the subjects, otherwise they become out-of-date.

They are found in various forms according to the size, volume and language as indicated below:

- i) Unabridged or abridged
- ii) Single volume or Multi-volume
- iii) Bilingual or Multilingual

Category	Dictionary
Unabridged or abridged	(a) <i>The McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Modern Economics: A Handbook of terms and organizations</i> by Greenwald. 3rd ed . New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983.
	(b) <i>The Concise McGraw -Hill Dictionary of Modern Economics, :</i> by Greenwald. New York:Mc Graw-Hill, 1984.
Single volume or multi-volume	(a) <i>A Dictionary of Economics and Commerce/</i> by John Lloyd Hanson. 5th ed. London: Mac Donald and Evans, 1981.
	(b) <i>The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics.</i> ed. by John Estwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman. London: Macmillan, 1987.4 vols.

- (c) *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences/* ed by Julious Gould and William L Kolb. New York: Free press., 1969.
- (d) *Stround's Judicial Dictionary of Words and Phrases.* 5th ed. by John S. James. London: Sweet and Mawell, 1986. 6 vols.

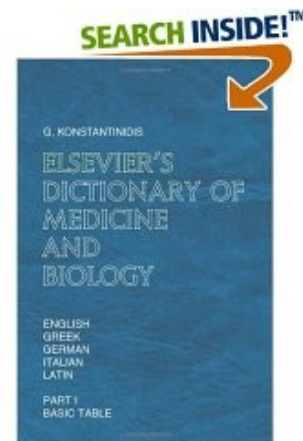
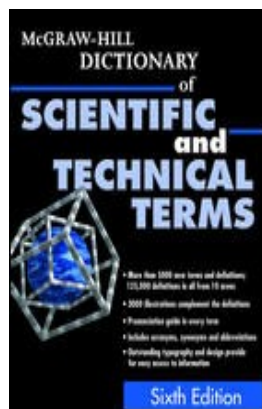
Bilingual or Multilingual

- (a) *German-English Technical and Engineering Dictionary/* by L.De Vries and T.M. Herimann. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.
 - (b) *English-German Technical and Engineering Dictionary /* by L.De Vries and T.M. Herimann. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.
 - (c) *Dictionary of Chemistry and Chemical Technology English-German /* by H.Gross, W. Besdorf and J. Knepper. 4th rev. ed. New York: Elsevier, 1994.
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There are some leading publishers who undertake the responsibility of bringing out dictionaries on various subjects. They are McGraw-Hill, Elsevier, Penguin, etc. They have published popular series of subject dictionaries in various disciplines.

Always the new terms are coined or borrowed or added to the subject fields. Therefore, the subject dictionaries need regular revisions and new editions. Otherwise, they become obsolete.

They are encyclopedic in nature since they provide explanations and accurate definitions of technical terms, contain bibliographies and include eminent subject specialists, names and address of agencies and institutions belonging to the particular subject field and provide illustrations.



Self-Check Exercise-4

a) How do the subject dictionaries differ from general dictionaries?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

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(b) Why do the subject dictionaries need frequent revisions?

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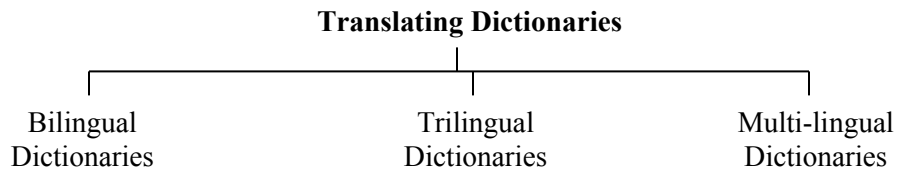
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TRANSLATING DICTIONARIES

The Translating Dictionaries are not confined to one language like monolingual general dictionaries outlined above. They deal with words of two or more languages. Therefore they are also known as interlingual dictionaries. There are three types of Translating dictionaries:



The dictionaries giving equivalent words in two languages are called Bilingual Dictionaries. The dictionaries which give equivalent words in three languages are known as Trilingual Dictionaries and the dictionaries providing equivalent words in four or more languages are Multi-lingual Dictionaries or Polyglot Dictionaries.

Special Features of Translating Dictionaries:

These dictionaries have some special features. They are:

i) They do not define words but they give accurate equivalent words in one or more languages they cover.

- ii) They have limited vocabulary.
- iii) They do not give historical or etymological details.
- iv) They provide pronunciation, stress parts of speech and genders so as to enable the learners to follow them easily.
- v) They include proper names.

Bi-lingual Dictionaries

They deal with two languages. A typical bilingual dictionary offers an equivalent foreign language word to the host language word. They are also available in various sizes and volumes.

The Harapp's, Cassell's and Oxford's family dictionaries are well known in this category.

Eg: *Harapp's New Standard French and English Dictionary*. / ed. by J.E. Mansion. Completely revised and enlarged edition by R.P.L. Ledesert and Margaret Ledesert. London: Harapp, New York: Scribner, 1972-1980.

Cassell's French Dictionary – French-English, English-French / Compiled by Devis Girard. London: Cassell & Co., 1980.

Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary. Revised extended 4th ed. by A.S. Hornby. Beijing : OUP Hongkong, 2002.

Hindi

An English-Hindi Dictionary by Father Kamil Bulke. 3rd ed. New Delhi: S.Chand, 1995.

A Practical Hindi-English Dictionary by Mahendra Chaturvedi and Bholanath Tiwari. 25th ed. Delhi. National Publishing House, 1995.

Telugu

Telugu Nighantuvu by Charles Philip Brown (Telugu-English) 2nd rev.ed brought uptodate by M. Venkat Ratnam, W.H. Campbell and Rao Bahadur K. Veereshalingam. New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995.

English-Telugu Dictionary by P.Sankaranarayana. 10th ed.

Trilingual Dictionaries

They give equivalent words in two other languages for a host language word. India is being a multilingual country, it has adopted a trilingual policy. These dictionaries are very much useful to language learners and translators and students.

Eg: *A Dictionary: Bengali-Sanskrit-English* by G.C. Haugton. Delhi: Caxton Publications, 1987. (2 vols).

Hindi-Tamil-English Trilingual Dictionary. 3 vols. New Delhi: Central Hindi Directorate, 1986.

Multi-lingual Dictionaries

They also known as *Polyglot dictionaries*. They give equivalent words in four or more languages. They are arranged alphabetically by the main language with the equivalent words in the other languages covered in a tabular form.

Eg. *The International Dictionary: The words you need in 21 languages* / by H.L.Ouseg. Citadel press, 1995.

Bharatiya Vyavahar Kosh / ed by Vishwanath Dinker Narvane. Pune: Mehta Publishing House, 1985. (It covers fifteen Indian languages and English).

Self-Check Exercise-5

What are the special features of Translating dictionaries?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

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Special Dictionaries

The dictionaries compiled to deal with special purpose and aspects of language are called Special Dictionaries. Some of them cater to special class of persons. They deal with special aspects of the words much more comprehensively than the general dictionaries. The special dictionaries are divided into three undermentioned groups according to their content and scope:

Dictionaries covering specific linguistic aspects of the words (a)	Dictionaries covering a special types or class of words (b)	Dictionaries dealing with literary aspects and catering to special group of persons. (c)
Dictionary of - i) Pronunciation ii) Punctuation iii) Spelling iv) Synonyms and Antonyms v) Usage vi) Etymological and Historical	Dictionary of - i) Slang Words ii) New Words iii) Difficult words iv) and Acronyms v) Dialect words vi) Obsolete words vii) Names viii) Cross word puzzles ix) Sign and symbols x) Anagrams	Dictionary – i) Folktales ii) Rhyming words iii) Cliches Abbreviations iv) Idioms v) Proverbs vi) Quotations vii) Phrases viii) Foreign terms ix) Gradus x) Nursery Rhymes xi) Concordances xii) Characters

Examples :

The following are some of the examples of Special Dictionaries :

Dictionary of Correct Spelling / by Norman Lewis. New York : Harper & Row, (Indian Edn.1987).

A Dictionary of Sland and Unconventional English / by Eric Patridge, ed by Paul Beale, Rev ed. London : Souteledge and Kegan Paul, 2002.

Abbreviations Dictionary / by Dean Stahl. Karen Kerchelich, originated by Ralph De Soal. 10th ed. Boca Raton, FL : CRC Press, 2001.

Webster's Official Crossword Puzzle Dictionary. 2nd ed. By Merriam Webster, 1999. *The Book of Signs* / by Rudolph Koch. Dover Publications, 1985.

Longman Anagram Dictionary / by R.J. Edwards. Harlow : Longman, 1985.

A Dictionary of Cliches with an introductory essay / by Eric Patridge. 5th ed. London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

The Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English / by A.P. Crowie and Others. Oxford University Press.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. 4th ed. By Elizbeth Knowles, Oxford : Lock, 1999.

Oxford Dictionary Nursery Rhymes / by Lons Opie and Peter Opie. 2nd ed. Oxford : OUP, 1998.

Vedic Concordance / by Maurice Bloomfield. Cambridge : Harvard University Press (Harvard Oriental Service-Vol.10) - First published in 1906. Repring in 1996.

Self-Check Exercise-6

What information is covered by the special dictionaries?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

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5.2.4 Uses of Dictionaries

The uses of a dictionary depend to a large extent on the type of the dictionary. Usually, people use dictionaries to verify the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of words. But many dictionaries have various other than generally realized uses.

a) General Language Dictionaries

The General Dictionaries are used for four broad purposes they are:

- i) as a quick reference tool
- ii) as a language standardiser
- iii) as a language recorder
- iv) as a vocabulary builder

- i) **Dictionary as a quick reference tool:** They act as a quick reference tool. They help us to verify spelling, syllabication, hyphenation. and pronunciation of a word. It is also used to find out the different meanings of a word or phrase. The unabridged general dictionaries can be referred to get much more specialized information, like homonyms. They also cover geographical and biographic information i.e., regarding places and persons.
- ii) **Dictionary as Language Standardiser:** In eighteenth century, it was commonly accepted that dictionary should be prescriptive and should try to standardize the spelling, pronunciation. meaning and usage to words. Even in the twentieth century, standardization has been agreed to be one of the objectives of the dictionary. But the difference lies in the methods of compilation. In the eighteen century, standardisation was based on the opinions and judgements of the compilers alone, where as now, it is achieved from the evidence gathered after carefully scrutinized inventory of words from the recorded sources of the language. It helps in eliminating the variations in spellings and usage of the words.
- iii) **Dictionary as a Language Recorder :** General unabridged dictionaries such as the Oxford English Dictionary act as a record of the development of the language. They give etymological details of the words, their history, origin and derivation and thereby the changes undergone in meaning and usage of the words from time time can be seen.
- iv) **Dictionary as a Vocabulary Builder:** The systematic use of dictionary clears doubts regarding the meaning and usage. Thus, it helps in building up a good vocabulary and ensure the proper use of words in a context.

b) Subject Dictionaries

The subject dictionaries give words, phrases, expressions and technical terms of a particular the meaning and usage. Thus, it helps in building up a good vocabulary and ensures the proper use of word in a context.

c) Translating Dictionaries

These dictionaries will help in translating words from one language to other. They are useful aids to learn a foreign language having elementary knowledge of that language can even use general foreign language dictionary which will give exact meaning in the language he is learning. The translating dictionaries normally give equivalents and not real definitions.

d) Special Dictionaries

The special dictionaries can be divided into four major groups. They are:

- i) Dictionaries dealing with Linguistic aspects of words
- ii) Dictionaries dealing with Special class of words

- iii) Dictionaries dealing with Literary aspects of words
 - iv) Dictionaries dealing with Words meant for specific type of person.
- i) The Special dictionaries dealing with the special aspects of the language helps to check pronunciation, spellings, meanings, usage and etymology of a word. They help us to find antonyms, synonyms and homonyms.
 - ii) The special dictionaries covering a special class of words help in locating slang, obsolete and dialect words, foreign terms borrowed and used in the language, new words which are either coined or borrowed from languages, difficult words and names, etc.
 - iii) The dictionaries dealing with the literary aspects of the language, aid in finding suitable proverbs, quotations, idioms, phrases, foreign terms, etc. They also cover words used by a particular author or in a particular work.
 - iv) There are dictionaries compiled with specialized approach to include words meant for specific type to persons. The Rhyming dictionaries and Gradus are meant for poets. Dictionaries of folktales and nursery rhymes are meant for children and parents and teachers teaching in nursery primary schools.

Thus, various types of dictionaries are intended for different people and they help users to find answers to their problems regarding words. However, users should know what dictionaries should be referred for getting proper answer. They should use dictionaries intelligently.

5.2.5 Evaluation of Dictionaries

The advancement in art of Lexicography and Publishing trade has resulted in the production of a large number of dictionaries. The old ones are often revised, updated and brought out as new editions with more accurate information and in a new format. It is becoming difficult to make relevant selection out of many available in the market. At the same time, one cannot expect any dictionary to be perfect. Dr. Samuel Johnson rightly observed while comparing dictionaries with watches that “Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none than and the best cannot be expected to be quite true”.

Therefore, no dictionary is accurate and self sufficient. Language always changes fast. As such new words are added and old words become obsolete in a language.

Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate them carefully and before acquiring them one has to assess the value both in terms of contents and money. The check points for proper evaluation of dictionaries are:

- i) Authority
- ii) Scope and purpose
- iii) Arrangement
- iv) Format
- v) Special features.

i) Authority:

The authority of a dictionaries can be determined by the reputation of its compilers, editors, publishers, etc. Usually a linguist or a philologist helped by experts in pronunciation, spelling, etymology and the various subject fields together produces a dictionary. The authoritativeness of

these compilers and the experts can be evaluated on the basis of their qualifications and scholarly contributions.

The history of a particular dictionary also plays an important role in assessing the value of a dictionary. A publication which has undergone changes by publishing a number of revised editions over a few decades can usually be considered reliable and dependable.

There are a few publishers who are well known in the field of Lexicography for the last two to three centuries. In the United States, G & C Merriam Company of Springfield, Massachusetts, Funk & Wagnalls company and Random House Inc. of New York and in Britain, Oxford, Collins, Chambers, Longman are some of the notable publishers who specialize in publishing dictionaries. Elsevier Publishers have earned name for subject dictionaries.

ii) **Scope and Purpose**

The Editor or Compiler states the scope and purpose of the dictionary in the preface and introduction. The category in which the dictionary falls and the type of reader for whom it is intended for, help us to determine the purpose of the dictionary.

The size of the vocabulary and bases used for word selection are important criteria. They help understand the scope.

iii) **Word arrangement and word treatment:**

Entries in dictionaries are arranged alphabetically, either letter-by-letter or word-by-word. There should be consistency in arrangement. A well designed dictionary with proper guidance to use makes it easier to refer it.

iv) **Format:**

The format of a dictionary should be compatible with efficient use. It can be assessed under the five headings:

a) Size; b) Binding; c) Paper; d) Print; and e) Appearance.

a) **Size:** The size of a dictionary depends upon the coverage of entries. A single compact volume and a tall thin volume rather than short fat volume is preferred for multi-volume sets.

b) **Binding:** As dictionary is used often by many users, it is advisable both for the libraries and also for the individuals to purchase hard-bound cover editions.

c) **Paper:** The paper used in the dictionaries should be opaque and thin. The thickness of the paper adds to the weight and physical bulk of the dictionary.

d) **Print:** The print size, use of bold face type and the spacing between words are the most important factors. The clarity in print, adequate inside and outside margins of division page into two narrow columns, thumb indexes for each alphabet, guide keys and plenty of aids, devices and tables, and natural colour and proportionate in size illustrations are the few criteria which help in evaluation of a dictionary.

e) **Appearance:** Lastly, depending upon the above criteria which make the functional appeal, the dictionary should be pleasing and appealing in appearance too.

v) Special features:

Dictionaries having the following special features are considered very useful:

- Geographical and historical details of different places including size, population and other census figures.
- Biographical sketches of some notable persons in different fields of the world.
- Names of famous social, political, economic, religious educational organizations, institutions and associations.
- Maps and line-drawn illustrations of words which cannot be otherwise easily explained.
- Coloured pictures of flowers, fruits, vegetables, insects, birds, animals, flags, automobiles, etc. with natural colours proportionate in size to give clear idea of the things to users.
- Tables of weights and measures.

It is also necessary to keep a dictionary upto-date by revising it periodically in order to eliminate some obsolete words and include new words.

There are a number of evaluation sources which aid the librarians to assess the value of individual dictionaries. A reference librarian may refer them and read the reviews given in following sources before purchasing a dictionary.

A Guide to Foreign language courses and Dictionaries / by A.J. Walford and J.E.O Screen. 3rd ed. London: Library Association. 1977.

International Bibliography of Dictionaries. Munich: Veriag Documentation. 1977.

Bibliography of Interlingual Scientific and Technical Dictionaries by UNESCO. 5th ed. Paris: UNESCO, 1969.

Scientific and Technical Dictionaries: An Annotated Bibliography. San Bernadino, California: Bibliotheca Press. 1966.

English Language Dictionaries in Print / by S. Padriag Walsh. New York: Bowker, 1977.

Apart from these selection evaluation tools for dictionaries, there are many more general guides to reference sources and also library journals consiting of reviews for dictionaries. They may also be scanned through before selecting dictionaries.

Self-Check Exercise-7

What are the check points for evaluating the dictionaries?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

.....
.....

5.3 SUMMING UP

This unit dealt with dictionaries and their importance as one of the most useful reference sources. The meaning, definition and various alternative names used for dictionaries such as Word-book, Thesaurus, Lexicon, Glossary and Vocabulary are discussed. Later the four types of dictionaries along with suitable examples are also discussed to show the difference between each of them. Lastly the usefulness of dictionaries and various check points to evaluate the dictionaries have been given to assess them properly before their acquisition.

5.4 MODEL ANSWERS

1(a) According to *Librarians Glossary* “a dictionary is a book explaining the words of a language, the words being arranged in alphabetical order; it usually gives the pronunciation and meaning of each word’.

(b) The basic difference between the two is :

a dictionary deals with the words where as an encyclopaedia gives information about the words or topics or subjects.

2(a) The various alternate names used for a dictionary are:

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| a) Word book, | b) Lexicon, | c) |
| Thesaurus, | | |
| d) Vocabulary, | e) Glossary, | f) Gradus |

3(a) The prescriptive dictionaries are compiled to set authoritative standards for spelling, pronunciation, meanings and usage. The Descriptive dictionaries are compiled to record the words of a language with their spellings, meanings and uses.

(b) (i) *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 20.vols. 1989.

(ii) *Webster’s third New International Dictionary of the English Language*.3rd ed. 1961.

4(a) The subject dictionaries contain highly specialised technical terms of a particular subject which are not found in general dictionaries.

The subject dictionaries are compiled by the subject specialists whereas the general dictionaries are compiled by the language specialists and generalists.

The subject dictionaries include brief biographies of eminent subject specialists, agencies and institutions belonging to the subject field which may not be found in General dictionaries.

(b) Due to the fast advancements in all the subjects new terms are coined or borrowed very frequently. These terms are to be included regularly in the dictionaries to update them. Therefore, they are agencies and institutions.

(a) Translating dictionaries are bilingual, trilingual & multilingual.

(b) They have limited vocabulary

(c) They give accurate equivalent words in other languages but they do not define them.

(d) They include pronunciation, stress, part of speech and genders.

(e) They do not cover historical or etymological details.

They cover specific linguistic aspects.

They cover specific type or class of words.

They deal with literature aspects.

They cater to the needs of special group of persons.

They deal comprehensively with specific aspects of the words.

7) Authority

Scope and purpose

Arrangement

Format

Special features

5.5 ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Collect information and give two examples for each of the following terms:

(i) Glossary (ii) Thesaurus (iii) Lexicon

2) Describe the following special dictionaries and their use:

(i) Crossword puzzles (ii) Signs and symbols (iii) Anagrams

3) Visit some university libraries and examine any three subject dictionaries. Write their full bibliographic details and provide brief annotations.

4) Find the meaning of the foreign words listed below:

(i) *Sine die* (ii) *Status Quo* (iii) *De Jure* (iv) *Laissez-faire*

5.6 RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Chenoy, Frances Neel. *Fundamental Reference Sources*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1971.

Higgins, Gavin, (ed). *Printed Reference Material*. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH, 1980.Ch.2.

Katz, W.A. *Introduction to Reference Work. Vol.1 : Basic Information Sources*. 5th ed. Singapore: Mc Graw-Hill Co., 1992. 2v.

Krishan Kumar. *Reference Service*. 3rd rev ed. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House (P) Ltd., 1989 (Reprint of 1987 ed.).

Mukherjee, A.K. *Reference Work and its tools*. 3rd rd ed. New Delhi: world Press, 1975.

Sheehy, Engene P. *Guide to Reference Books*. 10th ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1986.

5.7 GLOSSARY

- Cyclopedia** : An encyclopedia limited to a special field of subject.
- Encyclopedia** : A Storehouse of knowledge which provides significant information.
- Index** : A systematic guide to the location of words, concepts or other items.

5.8 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. List various families of English Dictionaries and briefly explain them with examples.
2. Distinguish different alternative names of Dictionary and briefly explain with suitable examples
3. What are Special Dictionaries ? Explain them with examples.

II. SHORT NOTES

- a) Bilingual Dictionaries
- b) Subject Dictionaries